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ABSTRACT

England's National Literacy Strategy is intended to raise standards of literacy for every student. Teachers should aim to include each student in the Literacy Hour. Evidence from the National Literacy Project (NLP), on which the national strategy is based, shows that students with widely varying needs can expect to improve their literacy skills in line with the challenging objectives in the Framework for Teaching, when taught effectively within the Literacy Hour. This guidance booklet builds on the experience of the NLP. The booklet addresses issues related to teaching: in mixed-year classes and small schools; reception-aged children; children speaking English as an additional language (EAL); and children with special educational needs (SEN). Its guidance extends advice already given in the question-and-answer form in the Strategy's management training materials. (NKA)

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The National Literacy Strategy--Framework for Teaching: Additional Guidance.

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The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching: Additional guidance

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

- The purpose of the additional guidance
- Who the guidance is for
- Additional adults in the classroom
- Involving parents
- Differentiation

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

The purpose of the additional guidance

The National Literacy Strategy is intended to raise standards of literacy for every pupil. Teachers should aim to include every pupil in the Literacy Hour. Evidence from the National Literacy Project (NLP), on which the national strategy is based, shows that pupils with widely varying needs can expect to improve their literacy skills in line with the challenging objectives in the *Framework for teaching*, when taught effectively within the Literacy Hour. This guidance builds on the experience of the NLP. It addresses issues related to teaching:

- in mixed-year classes and small schools;
- Reception-aged children;
- children speaking English as an additional language (EAL); and
- children with special educational needs (SEN).

The guidance extends advice already given in the question and answer form in the strategy's management training materials[1]. It is based on the following principles:

- Teaching the Literacy Hour effectively will give benefits to all pupils in the class. Teachers should have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers should aim to keep all the children in the class for the Literacy Hour. The structure of the Literacy Hour allows for class teaching that meets individual needs and provides for differentiated group and independent work.
- Speaking and listening are essential foundations for literacy development, and effective teaching of literacy will offer opportunities to promote oral skills. Many of the objectives in the *Framework for teaching* reflect the centrality of oral work in literacy.
- Where extra support is available, it should be deployed in the Literacy Hour. Additional adults should work in close partnership with teachers as they plan and teach the Literacy Hour.
- Teachers should assess pupils carefully to gauge their progress and set appropriate targets for further progress and achievement in relation to the objectives in the Framework.
- Schools should use every opportunity to help pupils practise and extend their literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum, and use the school and the wider environment to promote and apply these skills in practical ways.
- Effective teaching for pupils who have particular needs will often support and improve the teaching of other pupils in the class.

[1] *The Management of Literacy at School Level: Notes for Conference Delegates*, (Crown copyright 1998), Appendix 1.

Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

- The purpose of the additional guidance
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Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Who the guidance is for

The guidance is for everyone who teaches the daily Literacy Hour. Almost all primary classes cater for children with a range of attainment, and from varied social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Mixed year groups are common in a majority of schools, most classes will have children with some level of special educational needs, and in many classes, children who speak English as an additional language. Teachers need to plan and organise classes carefully in order to provide for this range of individual needs.

National guidance cannot give detailed advice on dealing with the many different classroom situations teachers face. The purpose of this guidance is, therefore, to set out some basic assumptions and practical ideas to help teachers make their own professional judgements. The guidance is based on experience to date in teaching the Literacy Hour successfully to a wide variety of classes. But this written guidance will not stand alone. As experience of the National Literacy Strategy grows across the country, teachers' expertise in teaching the Literacy Hour in their different circumstances will also grow. It is important to capitalise on this expertise, and allow others to benefit. The Regional Directors of the strategy and others will be seeking to share good practice, new ideas, and solutions to common problems through national and local networks in the course of the next school year.

Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

- The purpose of the additional guidance
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- Involving parents
- Differentiation

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Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Additional adults in the classroom

The Literacy Hour has been designed to be taught by a teacher working without support from an additional adult. Where this support is available, however, it should be used to maximum advantage. Additional adults include specialist teachers for pupils with SEN and EAL, classroom assistants supporting pupils who have fallen behind, or who have special educational needs, nursery nurses and parents or other volunteers. These people have a key role to play in the National Literacy Strategy, which should give them an enhanced sense of responsibility for the pupils they work with, and help them to focus on short term learning targets.

It is important that these additional adults receive training about the National Literacy Strategy so that they can work alongside the teacher during the Literacy Hour. If they work with the class regularly, they should be involved in planning the literacy work with the teacher. Where EAL or special needs support staff are involved in this planning, they can help the teacher to select texts and other resources to meet the needs of their children and help the children to apply literacy skills in the rest of the curriculum. Everyone involved in teaching the Literacy Hour should be aware of the objectives for that day's lesson. They should be able to make notes and comment afterwards about the progress that pupils have made against these objectives.

Additional adults obviously have a particular role to play in supporting or teaching differentiated groups. They can also be very effective in supporting individuals during whole class sessions led by the teacher.

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

- The purpose of the additional guidance
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- Involving parents
- Differentiation

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Involving parents

Parents' support is very important for the success of the National Literacy Strategy. Good teaching of literacy in schools is central to the strategy. Support from the family and the community is also vital if children are to understand the relevance of literacy skills to real life, and get opportunities to practise and reinforce them in everyday situations outside the classroom. That is why the National Year of Reading is a key part of the strategy to raise standards of literacy.

The involvement of parents or carers is, of course, vital for all children to make progress. It is especially important to ensure that young children make a good start in developing literacy skills, and where children face a particular challenge, whether because of special educational needs, or because they speak English as an additional language.

Parents can be involved at home through reading and writing activities and by sharing targets and records, but will need guidance on how to do so. They will want to understand how their children are being taught to read and write. This is especially important where the teaching method is different from their experiences with older children or their recollection of how they were taught at school. Some schools use regular newsletters to keep parents informed. Some produce 'Help' leaflets for parents, and home reading records, which tell parents what their child has covered and how they can support the child at home. The Basic Skills Agency has produced a leaflet to support the literacy strategy, which has been made available to all schools. Some schools produce banks of bookmarks that show parents areas in which their child needs help, such as recognising a few key words in the book that has been sent home.

Parents can be involved in school by helping in the Literacy Hour. Schools in the NLP reported that more parents were willing to commit an hour of time rather than a whole session or day.

Related Items

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

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- Involving parents
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Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Differentiation

The Literacy Hour is designed to maximise children's time with the teacher. Approximately 75% of their time within the hour should be spent with the teacher each week either in groups or - the greater proportion - in a whole class. This allows for a controlled degree of differentiation, while holding the class together and avoiding a highly individualised approach to teaching. Individualised teaching spreads the ability range and often disadvantages the most and least able children. Class teaching caters effectively for individual needs. By using common texts and activities, teachers can hold the class together yet maximise participation and challenge children at different levels. The Literacy Hour provides a balance between class teaching with a common task, and group teaching or independent work in which texts and tasks are differentiated to meet particular needs.

Teachers in the National Literacy Project found whole class work to be highly beneficial. They kept children involved and motivated by well focused questioning, encouraging and praising individual contributions and promoting class discussion. This benefits children who need help to access the curriculum, e.g. low attainers, those with special needs or limited fluency in English, by introducing them to challenging work, teaching them skills in a highly supportive context and raising their expectations and self-esteem. Whole class work also benefits more able pupils. By tailoring questions and inviting contributions at more challenging levels, teachers in the National Literacy Project expected more able children to be able to explain and justify their ideas, to make generalisations, generate hypotheses, and offer critical comments. All this, in a class situation, challenged the able whilst keeping within contexts that lower attainers could understand and in which they could participate.

Teachers should therefore aim to maintain the overall balance of class and group teaching time in the Literacy Hour. This allows for a reasonable balance of whole class and independent work and of teaching approaches.

There will sometimes be circumstances, however, in which more differentiation is justified, such as classes with more than two year groups, or classes with Reception and Years 1 and 2 children. There are four basic organisational options for increasing the amount of differentiation. It is important to keep the organisation as close as possible to the Literacy Hour. Changes should be as simple as possible so that children, parents and other staff can easily understand them. The options are:

- following the Literacy Hour, but reducing the amount of whole class time to allow for more group time;
- increasing the time to allow for more group teaching while retaining the same level of whole class work - this takes more curricular time and may affect the balance of teaching time for other subjects;
- making use of an additional adult to provide simultaneous teaching or support during the Literacy Hour; and
- setting across a number of classes - this is possible in some circumstances, but it is important to take care to ensure that setting does not lower the expectations of what lower attainers and

Related items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

children with other special needs can achieve.

Schools should weigh these options carefully to maximise the benefit for all children. Often it is possible to balance them. For example, a teacher could make good use of additional adult help on two days a week when it is available, while sticking to the basic Literacy Hour structure for other days. The Literacy Hour could be extended for some days, but not for all, in a week to provide focused sessions for particular groups e.g. summer entrants in the reception year, able children, low attainers, children who need help to prepare for or follow up class work.

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

- Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools
- 1 Classes with two year groups
- 2 Classes with more than two year groups

Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Many schools in the NLP have already worked out practical ways of managing the Literacy Hour in mixed year classes. The advice below is based on their experience.

There are broadly two kinds of mixed year organisation:

- classes with two year groups and a two-year curricular cycle; and
- classes with more than two year groups, commonly found in smaller schools.

Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

- Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools
- 1. Classes with two year groups
- 2. Classes with more than two year groups

Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

1. Classes with two year groups

Schools have a variety of patterns and age groups in mixed age classes. Where most classes contain pairs of age groups - Year 1/2, Year 3/4, Year 5/6, with Reception pupils either taught separately or included in the mixed Year 1/2 class schools usually run their curriculum on a two-year rolling programme. This ensures stability and continuity for children and to make the curriculum manageable for teachers. The ability range in a two year mixed age class is sometimes very close to that found in a single age class. For this reason, and because it is more manageable, mixed year classes are often treated as mixed ability classes and work is planned on that basis.

The National Literacy Strategy is designed to work in this form of organisation. It needs very little adaptation in these circumstances, and can have some added benefits for children. The *Framework for teaching* is based on two-year cycles so that objectives *within* Years 1/2, 3/4, 5/6 are more closely linked than those *between* these pairs of years. It needs only some small adjustments to be taught as a two-year rolling programme. These adjustments include:

- *Planning from the Framework:* Teachers may decide that some objectives need to be supplemented by those from the other year. This may happen in the second year of rolling programmes, e.g. when Year 3 pupils are being taught year 4 objectives, or to extend the work for older children working in the first year of a two year planning cycle. Teachers should look through the term's objectives carefully at the planning stage.

- *Classes with Reception and Years 1 and 2:* It may be necessary to provide some differentiated time for children in the Reception year, depending on how they are organised. If they are included in a whole Key Stage 1 class, they will benefit from working with the rest of their class, but teachers must ensure that the early work in the Reception year objectives is covered, because the work in the next two years is built on it. A teacher or classroom assistant will probably need to do some extra work with the children to focus on essential early experiences such as early phonemic awareness, and identifying, segmenting and blending sounds, concepts of books and print through shared reading and writing, and getting started on independent reading and writing. If children are admitted at different points in the year, the additional time will probably be needed to focus on the needs of those who have just arrived.

- *Word-level objectives:* The objectives for 'Phonics and Spelling' in Key Stage 1 are ordered in a tighter progression than other objectives. It is vital that every child makes this progression. Teachers can cover this in class lessons by teaching a combination of objectives from each of the years. In these circumstances, teachers need to know how much the individual children understand about each objective, so that they can direct particular parts of the lesson at specific individuals or groups. The objectives are structured with this in mind. This approach also has the advantage of exposing less experienced children to more advanced work at an earlier stage, and giving more experienced children important opportunities to revise work.

Related Items

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Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

- *Year 3 children:* As children move into Key Stage 2, they will find themselves working alongside others just starting Year 4. The Year 3 objectives contain an essential revision section which the teacher needs to work through and check for each child. Some children may need some differentiated work, which can also include low attainers in Year 4 who need to reinforce essential skills and strategies.

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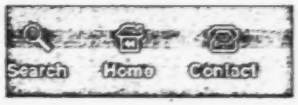

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

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- 1. Classes with two year groups
- 2. Classes with more than two year groups

Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

2. Classes with more than two year groups

Classes with more than two year groups occur mainly in small schools. Many of the organisational points above apply equally to small schools. As noted at the outset, it is impossible to cover every possible situation in guidance of this sort. It offers general principles on which schools can base decisions about how best to adapt the National Literacy Strategy to work well in their particular circumstances, based on the experience of schools in the National Literacy Project.

go to top

Organising classes

- Schools should start by reviewing their existing patterns of class and curricular organisation, with a view to making the *Framework for teaching* fit them.
- Wherever possible, schools should try to establish a consistent rolling programme so that children progress through each year of the objectives, even though they may stay with the same class. Existing planning cycles may provide a model for this. But a two year cycle will probably be the most straightforward, using the guidance above.
- In a three class school, classes can often be organised into a single Key Stage 1 class and two Key Stage 2 classes. If the Key Stage 2 classes are (or can be) organised in two-year bandings, the objectives in the Framework can be taught on a two-year cycle using or adapting the advice given above.
- If classes are not organised in this way, it is worth reviewing the organisation to see whether they could be. Schools should make every effort to avoid split Key Stage classes, or including children from the same year group in two different aged classes. The benefits in terms of curricular planning, teaching and continuity can outweigh the disadvantages in terms of uneven class sizes.

More complex groupings are unavoidable in some small schools. Some have only two classes and the whole of Key Stage 2 is therefore in a single class. Some have to split across the Key Stage e.g. to form one class of pupils from the Reception year to Year 3, and a second group of pupils from Years 3 to 6. Schools may also need to use this kind of organisation where the sizes of cohorts are particularly uneven, or where school populations are very unstable. In most two-year groupings the class can usually be taught as a mixed ability group, but teachers will need to differentiate by age as well as by ability in classes with these more extended age ranges.

go to top

Planning from the Framework

Schools with classes containing Reception and Years 1 and 2 children can

Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

follow the advice given above. That is, they can teach the Year 1 and 2 objectives on a two-year cycle, with supplementary provision to differentiate for children in the Reception year.

A whole Key Stage 2 class, however, will need to be planned in *two* two-year cycles to meet the different needs of Years 3/4 and Years 5/6. Each of these pairs of years can then be planned on the same basis as the two-year cycles described above. This inevitably makes the planning more complex. The adaptations should, however, be compatible with the way in which small schools already plan the curriculum, as they are often organised to differentiate between age groups.

go to top

Managing the Literacy Hour

The amount of differentiation that teachers plan for will affect the way in which they organise the Literacy Hour. If the teaching needs to be differentiated by age, the Literacy Hour will need to provide more class teaching times although group times can remain the same. The main options are:

- *Dividing the class teaching times between the two main groups in the class to focus on older and younger children at different times.* If this is done within the Literacy Hour, it gives children less direct teaching time than in daily sessions that cover each aspect of the hour. This is probably not feasible for most classes. Teachers will need to extend the hour somewhat to provide more class teaching time, or give extra time outside the hour to focus on specific groups e.g. shared text work for Years 3/4, or additional guided reading times.

- *Using an additional adult.* Small schools should, ideally, try to have additional adults available to support the Literacy Hour to help during group sessions. It also allows teachers to re-group children during the first half of the Literacy Hour. Additional adults are increasingly common in Key Stage 1 classes, and, with appropriate training, should contribute greatly to the quality and manageability of the Literacy Hour for small schools. Additional support is also sometimes available at Key Stage 2, perhaps through a part-time teacher or volunteer helper. Even with extra adult help, however, teachers may want to extend the hour to allow more direct teaching time with each age band.

- *Re-grouping, setting and co-operative teaching.* Small schools often find it hard to maintain a consistent rolling curriculum programme because the numbers in each year group tend to be unstable and uneven. If a school has only two or three teachers, small changes in year group sizes can have a big impact on class composition, and make it hard for the school to apply the models above. Small schools may have to re-group children each year and create cross-Key Stage classes e.g. combining Years 2, 3 and 4. It is vital that teachers plan together and monitor classes carefully in these circumstances, so that there is continuity in teaching and learning, and individuals or groups do not 'fall through the net'.

In some cases, schools may wish to consider re-grouping children for some or all of the Literacy Hour. This means timetabling the hour at the same time for all the classes involved. It could be used to set for the whole Literacy Hour, to enable teachers to create better targeted group work, or to re-group for some of the class teaching time. Teachers should use additional adult support at these times wherever possible, to increase flexibility and the scope for sub-groups. Teachers need to plan and co-ordinate re-grouping carefully, and monitor its effects, especially for lower-achieving pupils or those who need extra support to access the curriculum. It is important that teachers do not lower their expectations of these pupils as a result of placing them into particular groups.

The following illustration shows how one teacher taught the Literacy Hour in a class with a wide age and ability range in a small school.

The combinations in the classes in the school vary greatly from year to year. This year, Mrs Gupta has nine children in Year 2, thirteen in Year 3 and seven in Year 4 in her class. Three of the Year 2 children have statements of special educational needs, and join the Key Stage 1 class for the Literacy Hour three times a week. The Key Stage 1 class also has six Year 2 children.

Mrs Gupta has planned a rolling programme from Year 3 objectives in the first year and Year 4 objectives in the second year. She has grouped her class by ability for guided reading and writing. Two of her very able children join a guided reading group in the upper Key Stage 2 class twice a week. The school has timetabled the Literacy Hour simultaneously in all three classes to allow pupils to move between groups in this way. Teachers have occasional help, largely from parent volunteers.

The teachers monitor progress regularly to make sure their expectations of children are appropriate. They set individual and group targets for all children, using a staff meeting each month to review particular individuals and make appropriate adjustments. Mrs Gupta and her colleagues feel that this way of working has been very successful in meeting the wide range of ability needs in one class and throughout the school.

The flexibility enables Mrs Gupta to provide an appropriate start to Key Stage 2 for Year 3 children, to stretch those in Year 4, and to provide the necessary consolidation and reinforcement of Key Stage 1 for Year 2 children.

go to top

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

- Children of Reception Age
- Planning from the Framework for teaching
- Introducing the Literacy Hour
- Summer term admissions
- Teaching the Literacy Hour once established
- Nursery education
- Involving parents

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Children of Reception Age

This material has now been superseded by: Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes.

The Reception year is a critical time for building on children's developing literacy. Becoming literate depends on developing confidence and positive attitudes towards listening, speaking, reading and writing in children, and encouraging them to be keen to learn. Attention to children's personal and social and physical development, as well as good teaching, is vital for establishing the attitudes and abilities children need to concentrate, co-operate, share the teacher's time and attention with their peers, and work independently of an adult.

The *Framework for teaching* describes the literacy objectives that should be taught in the Reception year. It supports the goals for early literacy described in the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning on entering compulsory education (DLOs). Together, the Framework and the DLOs provide a firm foundation for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. All six areas of learning of the DLOs can be used imaginatively to encourage speaking and listening. The abilities to speak competently and to listen with understanding are vital to the early and continuing development of literacy skills. QCA are reviewing the DLOs and a consultation on the regulation of early education, including adult:child ratios, has recently been completed. The implications of any changes will be taken into account as the National Literacy Strategy develops.

Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

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Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

- Children of Reception Age
- Planning from the Framework for teaching
- Introducing the Literacy Hour
- Summer term admissions
- Teaching the Literacy Hour once established
- Nursery education
- Involving parents

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Planning from the Framework for teaching

Because of the variety of patterns of admission to reception classes, some schools plan from the DLOs, some from the National Curriculum, and others from a mixture of both. The objectives in the Framework link the literacy goals in the DLOs to the early reading and writing requirements of the National Curriculum for English. They allow teachers to plan in line with the school's admission arrangements. This means that, for some children who entered Reception late in the year, the Reception year objectives can be continued in Year 1.

Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

- Children of Reception Age
- Planning from the Framework for teaching
- Introducing the Literacy Hour
- Summer term admissions
- Teaching the Literacy Hour once established
- Nursery education
- Involving parents

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Introducing the Literacy Hour

Teachers need to consider the needs and prior experiences of the children carefully. Schools in the NLP found that explicit literacy teaching in the Reception year complemented existing good practice. Children were given enriching language experiences through stories, role-play, rhymes, poetry and books. They were taught reading and writing strategies, with a strong emphasis on phonological awareness, in ways that were imaginative and relevant to their stage of development.

The Literacy Hour provides a common structure and clear class routine, based on consistent planning and teaching. The pace of teaching, the high level of interaction between adults and children, the variety of activities and the opportunities for praise and reinforcement make it an effective model for working with young children. Many schools in the NLP introduced Literacy Hours gradually in the reception classes. The staff extended the time of each phase of the hour over a period of days or weeks until the full hour was achieved. This had the advantage of building up children's concentration and helping them to become familiar with the routine from the outset.

Mrs Park has a reception class of 28 children. All the children are admitted during September and spend three terms in the reception class. The teacher has limited assistance, but parents are encouraged to stay on in the first term until their children have settled. Mrs Park displays what the children will be learning in the first term on a notice board. Two parents have each offered to help for one morning a week. Most of the children have attended playgroup. In the classroom all the cupboards, shelves and drawers are labelled and outline shapes help children find and put away equipment.

When children arrive in the class, they find their name cards and fix them to a 'register chart'. Parents stay for about ten minutes to look at a book with their children. The first two weeks in the class are spent establishing routines, introducing children to the activities and equipment, getting to know the children and making assessment observations. This information, together with that from parents, enables Mrs Park to build up a picture of the broad range of ability in the class.

At the beginning of the third week, Mrs Park introduces aspects of the Literacy Hour. She builds up the timings so that by half term all the elements of the hour are in place. Mrs Park uses the learning objectives from the Framework in her planning. The objectives are reinforced in activities such as learning songs and rhymes, playing with picture and word games, drawing and writing, and sharing books.

The advice above about differentiation and mixed age classes may also help teachers to devise organisational patterns to cater for the needs of children in the Reception year. Many schools have introduced the Literacy Hour very successfully from the start of the year. But if a school does decide it needs to be more flexible, it should bear the following points in mind:

- The Reception year objectives should be taught systematically from the outset, even if not necessarily through a formal Literacy

Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

Hour. Headteachers should be satisfied that this is being planned for, and is happening in the classroom.

- Shared reading with the class and guided reading in groups should be implemented from the start, as both are essential for early reading development.
- Word level work should also be taught from an early stage, although it may be covered in groups rather than with the whole class, especially if this means that pupils have more direct contact with adults, and better differentiation to cater for the level at which children are starting.
- Teachers should plan to introduce a full Literacy Hour as soon as possible and, at the very latest, by the end of the term before children move into Year 1.

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

- Children of Reception Age
- Planning from the Framework for teaching
- Introducing the Literacy Hour
- Summer term admissions
- Teaching the Literacy Hour once established
- Nursery education
- Involving parents

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Summer term admissions

It is important to know about children's pre-school experiences and language development. Information from parents, records from pre-school education and from baseline assessment contribute to the teacher's knowledge and enable them to monitor children's progress carefully. The arrangements that schools have in place to support and monitor children admitted in the summer term should be used when introducing the children to the Literacy Hour.

Teachers need to adapt the structure of the Literacy Hour to the needs of children who start school in the summer term. They should be included in shared reading and writing work, although teachers will need to be particularly vigilant about their needs.

Some children will enter school much more prepared for literacy than others. It is likely that many will need additional intensive time with an adult to catch up with work already covered in the previous term or terms. Where additional adult time is available, it should be used to provide direct support and to release the teacher to work with the children on a regular basis. This support should be available during the Literacy Hour but should also be used to provide extra teaching time outside the hour. Additional support for summer-born children should be used to settle them into class, to assess their needs and abilities and, most importantly, to ensure that they have covered as much as possible of the work in the Reception year objectives by the time they move into Year 1.

Mr Jackson has a reception class which admits children every term. Eight new children join the class in the summer term, bringing the total to 30. Six of the eight new children have attended playgroup or nursery. All have visited the school and have some experience of the Literacy Hour. Parents were given details of the curriculum including the Literacy Hour, and guidance on helping with literacy at home.

Mr Jackson includes all children in the shared reading and writing sessions from the outset. He uses differentiated questioning to include all the children and to test their understanding. Some of this information contributes to the baseline assessment. Mr Jackson encourages the new children to take part by letting them turn the pages and by using the pointer to show print direction, letters and pictures. He uses puppets to help maintain children's interest in the story and to help them understand it. He uses stories with repetition that encourage children to join in, and books with rhymes that are repeated and learned at other times in the day. As Mr Jackson has part-time help, he includes all the children in the word level session. This includes action rhymes and songs, sound games and tray games. He is 'assisted' by puppets that keep making mistakes and soft toys who cannot blend phonemes into words, or can only segment words into phonemes.

Each day Mr Jackson takes the new group and the children who need to reinforce some skills for an extra word level session. The older children act as role models, as they help to demonstrate the task board for group time. The independent tasks are active, and matched carefully to children's needs, for example sorting items according to initial sound. A listening centre supports shared reading. In the plenary, Mr Jackson notes points

Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

that need to be developed with the new children.

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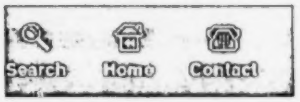

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

- Children of Reception Age
- Planning from the Framework for teaching
- Introducing the Literacy Hour
- Summer term admissions
- Teaching the Literacy Hour once established
- Nursery education
- Involving parents

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Teaching the Literacy Hour once established

All aspects of Literacy Hour work are appropriate to Reception children. The daily programme should include shared reading and writing, focused word-level teaching, guided reading, independent work and a class plenary. Clear guidance on each of these is contained in section 1 of the *Framework for teaching* and the supporting training materials.

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Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

- Children of Reception Age
- Planning from the Framework for teaching
- Introducing the Literacy Hour
- Summer term admissions
- Teaching the Literacy Hour once established
- Nursery education
- Involving parents

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Nursery education

The variable patterns of admission to a full-time Reception place are affected by a number of factors, not least the availability of nursery and pre-school provision. Parents may choose to continue with a nursery or pre-school place until their child reaches compulsory school age. Many four year olds attend full or part-time provision in settings other than Reception classes. Staff working in these other settings have successfully included elements of the Literacy Hour in their sessions. This has given children focused literacy teaching and an opportunity to practise literacy skills through lively and interesting activities. They develop an understanding of literacy, and become familiar with the routines of the Literacy Hour.

Staff working in nursery and pre-school settings may therefore wish to adopt, and adapt sensitively, the Reception year literacy objectives and some of the strategies, particularly for older 4 year olds.

A nursery class has 26 part-time children, one teacher and a nursery nurse. Both have attended literacy training with the rest of the school staff, and have learned about the Literacy Hour, which is being introduced throughout the school.

In group time the children have experience of shared reading with big books. The teacher has also introduced weekly sessions of shared writing. The staff include word level work in action rhymes, songs and games, and develop word recognition throughout the nursery using name labels on pegs and milk cartons, name cards for the registration board, signing in for role play and to use the computer, and by labelling all cupboards and shelves with words and pictures or silhouettes.

Each week, the staff take groups of three or four children for a guided reading session with familiar books. They also run activities that support word-level work, regularly focusing on these to assess what children have learnt. At the end of each nursery session the staff, in the two groups, encourage children to review what they had done, using relevant examples to strengthen literacy teaching points.

At the end of a year the teacher and nursery nurse reflect on the changes they have made. They find that the children have enjoyed the teaching, and that parents report that they have shown increasing interest in literacy at home. Their assessments show that the majority of children have achieved the DLOs for language and literacy and increased their phonological awareness. Many children can read a range of familiar words and write their own names. Their vocabulary has advanced through the discussion in the shared and guided teaching sessions. By gradually increasing the time spent on shared and word level elements of the work, the children's concentration and ability to listen have improved. The children are aware of story structures and can re-read and recite stories and rhymes with predictable patterns. Children can think about and discuss what they intend to write. The staff think that all the children will be more confident about literacy in their Reception year.

Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

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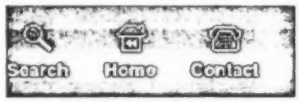

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

- Children of Reception Age
- Planning from the Framework for teaching
- Introducing the Literacy Hour
- Summer term admissions
- Teaching the Literacy Hour once established
- Nursery education
- Involving parents

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

Involving parents

The Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning recognise the prime importance of parental support, stating that:

'children's experiences at home are highly significant to achievement. Parents significantly influence their children's learning. When parents and adults ... work together to support children's learning, the results can have a measurable and lasting effect upon children's achievement. Effective partnership between home and school ... should therefore be developed as fully as possible.'

It is important that schools establish a dialogue with parents about literacy, before their child starts school. Some schools do this through meetings, displays and leaflets and an opportunity to observe a Literacy Hour. Once their child starts school, parents should get involved in reading and writing activities at home to reinforce what is done in school, and may well be interested in helping in the hour, as described at the beginning of this additional guidance. They will need guidance on how best to support young children.

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

- Introduction: EAL
- The range of pupils with EAL
- The place of languages other than English
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
- Teaching the Literacy Hour

Children with Special Educational Needs

Introduction: EAL

It is important that pupils with English as an additional language derive full benefit from the National Literacy Strategy. The *Framework for teaching*, and the Literacy Hour in which its objectives are taught, emphasise careful listening, clear speech, supported reading and writing, phonemic awareness and access to formal styles of written English. These emphases, and the participative nature of whole-class and group work, helps in teaching children who speak EAL, where teachers take full account of their specific needs. The Framework and the Literacy Hour can help children to become confident and fluent in using spoken English, the essential foundation for literacy skills.

This section of the guidance offers general support both to teachers and specialist language staff. Aspects of the guidance will be useful to headteachers and literacy co-ordinators responsible for the management of literacy at the school level.

Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

- Introduction: EAL
- The range of pupils with EAL
- The place of languages other than English
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
- Teaching the Literacy Hour

Children with Special Educational Needs

The range of pupils with EAL

A broad and varied population of pupils learn EAL. Some will be literate in languages other than English, some will be learning to speak English as well as learning to read and write it, and others will be able to hold conversations in English but will need help to use language in their work at school. Some may not need extra provision, and some who have not reached the level of literacy or oral proficiency expected for their age may need to have material adapted for them. It is important that teachers have information about pupils' educational history, and their literacy skills in another language, as this may be a significant factor in their success in learning English. It will be needed in planning how best to teach these pupils and in assessing their progress.

Pupils who enter Key Stage 2 with little or no English will need particular support and guidance. Where possible, it will be helpful to provide late entrants with an overview of the Literacy Hour, explaining the phases and structure of the lesson. It is helpful if teachers can include newly arrived pupils in the whole class activities from the earliest stages. Where additional specialist language support staff are available, they can work with the teacher to monitor these pupils' progress and give them individual support within the whole class setting. Placing newly arrived pupils in groups for guided reading or writing will require careful assessment and regular review.

Schools in the NLP have found that the Literacy Hour can help pupils to make more rapid progress in learning with EAL than might otherwise be the case. The Literacy Hour benefits new learners of English, when teaching is well matched to their needs, because:

- it promotes focused attention to language learning;
- whole class sessions can give many opportunities for pupils to hear English spoken often and distinctly, to speak to the teacher and to each other, and to develop their knowledge about language in a shared and familiar context;
- whole class sessions give helpful adult models of spoken English; and
- group work provides opportunities for intensive and focused teaching.

Related Items

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

- Introduction: EAL
- The range of pupils with EAL
- The place of languages other than English
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
- Teaching the Literacy Hour

Children with Special Educational Needs

The place of languages other than English

EAL learners who already know the sound system of another language and the principles of phonology and spelling can bring that awareness to bear when learning to read and write in English. Pupils need to develop speaking and listening skills in order to develop literacy skills. Literacy skills also help pupils to develop speaking and listening skills. Pupils learning with EAL need to hear good examples of spoken English, and use all their language skills to explore and discuss new learning. Managed carefully, talking about literacy in languages other than English can help EAL pupils to identify points of similarity and difference between languages at word, sentence and text level.

Where groups of pupils share the same home language, the use of dual language texts can promote discussion about reading and writing, help to build their confidence in tackling tasks in English and emphasise the importance of speaking and listening in the general development of literacy.

Related Items

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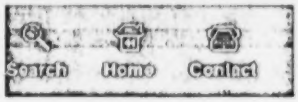

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching: Additional guidance

download/order

Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

- Introduction: EAL
- The range of pupils with EAL
- The place of languages other than English
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
- Teaching the Literacy Hour

Children with Special Educational Needs

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Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

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The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching: Additional guidance

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Introduction: Additional Guidance

Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

- Introduction: EAL
- The range of pupils with EAL
- The place of languages other than English
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
- Teaching the Literacy Hour

Children with Special Educational Needs

Teaching the Literacy Hour

Shared reading and writing

During shared reading and writing sessions, children should work with rich and varied texts that are beyond their independent reading level. During shared reading, pupils may revisit text to explore and to discuss it at different levels. Revisiting texts in this way is particularly helpful for EAL learners. Shared reading and writing can be used to:

- revisit a text or text extract to exploit maximum learning opportunities as identified in the *Framework for teaching*, e.g. preparing to re-tell stories orally, identifying and using some of the more formal features of story language;
- model and demonstrate the reading and writing process; and
- discuss how different forms of writing are constructed with the larger group and with the support of the teacher.

Ways of helping EAL learners in these sessions include:

- using short additional 'warm-up' sessions before introducing a new shared text, in which additional staff lead a brief discussion of key themes and ideas in the text that will help prepare EAL learners for the whole class shared reading. This will ensure they have access to the text and gain maximum benefit from the shared reading time. The warm-up will depend on the nature of the text and the needs of the pupils, but could include a discussion of key themes, or introducing key concepts in the home language;
- supporting an introduction to the shared text by using visual aids and/or relevant artefacts; and
- using the home language to enhance introductions to new concepts and ideas in shared texts.

Year 2 term 3: A teacher is working alone with a class of 30 pupils, a significant number of whom are learning EAL.

Objective 2 - Sentence level: The need for grammatical agreement, matching verbs to nouns/pronouns, e.g. *I am; the children are;* using simple gender forms, e.g. *his/her* correctly.

Activity: The teacher produces a script with gaps where pronouns should appear and a set of cards displaying pronouns 'his' or 'her'. Following a discussion about the key characters and themes pupils come out and place cards with 'his' or 'her' in the correct place. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their choice and check the decisions of others.

go to top

Whole class word or sentence level work

Related Items

The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

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Whole class word or sentence level work provides EAL learners with opportunities to learn more about how the English language system works. The regular and systematic teaching of phonemic awareness will support speaking, listening, reading and writing. Whole class word and sentence level work is most effective when:

- it is interactive, delivered at a good pace, and rooted in meaningful activities such as exploring alternative adjectives to extend a response to a known text, using language play to segment and blend sounds in words, or working to identify and articulate word endings that change meaning (common suffixes); and
- it provides opportunities for the teacher and pupils to discuss the meanings of words and extend the vocabulary of EAL learners.

Ways of supporting EAL learners in these sessions include:

- spending additional time discussing the meanings of words, especially examples of metaphorical and idiomatic language; and
- paying particular attention in sentence level work to tenses and the use of prepositions e.g. in Year 3 term 1, when teaching pupils to use verb tenses with increasing accuracy in speaking and writing.

Year 1 term 3: Teacher and a specialist language support teacher working with a significant number of pupils are learning with EAL.

Objective 1 - Word level: the common spelling patterns for each of the long vowel phonemes: ee *ai ie oa* oo (long as in moon) Appendix List 3:

to identify phonemes in speech and writing;

to blend phonemes for reading; and

to segment words into phonemes for spelling.

Activity: The class identified a list of words containing the common spelling pattern for the long vowel phoneme during word level work in the previous week. The teacher put the words on cards and distributed these. During the distribution of the cards, she took the opportunity to voice phonemes, which pupils blended to say the whole word. Pupils had to give a card to the appropriate puppet: Mr Blue, Miss Spoon or Mr Tune. Specialist staff working with pupils discussed the meanings of the words on the cards as they were presented.

go to top

Guided reading and writing

Guided reading and writing allows teachers to work with small groups of children to promote independent learning. Teachers use guided reading and writing to support the development of reading strategies. When planning guided reading and writing sessions, the teacher should:

- select texts carefully to meet the reading needs of the group as identified in the *Framework for teaching*, e.g. to read on sight high frequency words specific to graded books matched to the abilities of reading groups;
- pay particular attention to the language structures included in texts, and decide if pupils will need additional support in the introduction to the reading;
- consider how to identify and highlight features of the text when introducing and reading it that will help pupils from a range of linguistic and cultural heritages to gain access to its meaning;
- provide an introduction or orientation to text which will help to

activate appropriate prior knowledge, establish questions for resolution and generate motivation;

- provide explicit feedback on specific features of the writing process; and
- prompt pupils to use a range of strategies to support their reading.

Ways of supporting EAL learners in these sessions include:

- monitoring understanding by careful questioning and discussion - this is especially important;
- giving some pupils extra time to formulate and rework their responses to text and the writing of others;
- providing additional support to help EAL pupils generate and sustain writing in a newly introduced form, e.g. using writing frames; and
- listening carefully and taking every opportunity to praise oral contributions from pupils who are new to English, as pupils who are less confident speakers can rapidly fall silent. The careful use of praise can encourage them to take risks and help to build their confidence, success and self-esteem.

Year 6 term 3: A teacher and a specialist language support teacher are teaching a class of 30, in which a significant number of pupils are learning with EAL.

Objective 19 - Text Level: To review a range of non-fiction text types and their characteristics, discussing when a writer might choose to write in a given style and form.

Activity: The specialist language support teacher develops the theme of the shared reading session and in the guided reading identifies two further pieces of text that highlight the lesson objective and contain strong indications of text type. Following independent reading, he asks pupils to complete a grid that provides a supportive structure and clear descriptors as pupils identify key features of text type. The teacher uses completed grids to support group discussions, in which pupils are encouraged to use appropriate terminology to explain their choices and decisions.

go to top

Independent group work

The independent group work provides opportunities to apply and consolidate new learning. When planning activities, teachers need to:

- encourage pupils to engage in meaningful, challenging and collaborative tasks e.g. researching information from a range of selected non-fiction texts or producing joint responses to a shared story or play;
- provide a broad range of tasks which cover a wide range of objectives, including opportunities to work on sustained pieces of work that require them to apply skills at the text, sentence and word level; and
- promote the use of a broad range of literacy skills to solve problems and encourage pupils to be independent.

EAL learners should not automatically be placed in the lowest ability groups. Some may have conceptual understanding on a par with pupils in the highest ability group.

Ways of supporting EAL learners in these sessions include:

- giving pupils the opportunity to experience good models of English in different groups;
- giving some pupils opportunities to engage in additional discussion in English or where appropriate, other languages, when responding to text and planning their writing; and
- using a broader range of prompts and guides than with other pupils, including visual aids, to ensure that pupils in the early stages of learning English are clear about independent tasks.

Year 4 term 3: Teacher and a specialist language support teacher working with a class of 30 pupils, many of whom are learning with EAL.

Objective 2 - Sentence level: To identify the common punctuation marks including commas, semi-colons, colons, dashes, hyphens, speech marks, and to respond to them appropriately when reading.

Activity: During collaborative group work, the teacher asks pupils to read a text dialogue between six people. The text is marked to identify each character and features of punctuation. Each member of the group then takes a role in group reading of the text, paying particular attention to expression and intonation. Following discussion and rehearsal, the group presents the reading to the class in the plenary.

go to top

Whole class plenary session

The plenary session is an important phase of the Literacy Hour for all children. It will have special and added benefits when teachers use it:

- to provide an opportunity to revisit some of the lesson and, with guidance from the teacher, pinpoint the new things that have been learnt;
- to review and praise the strategies children have used to support successful learning at all levels; and
- to consolidate and revise, as well as highlight new learning which some children will need to revisit.

Ways of supporting EAL learners in these sessions include:

- placing special emphasis on speaking and listening, and discussing newly acquired literacy skills in an accessible context where children feel secure and supported, perhaps giving a clear introduction to the plenary or guiding and supporting contributions;
- introducing references to literacy skills and knowledge in other languages when highlighting new things that have been learnt; and
- ensuring that there is sufficient time for pupils at the early stages of English to consider and rework their oral contributions.

go to top

Using additional adults

As noted at the beginning of this additional guidance, it is important that where additional staff are available to support EAL learners, they should be closely involved in the planning, delivery and assessment of the Literacy Hour. They also need to be aware of the literacy targets relevant to the class or group they are working with. Collaborative planning using the *Framework for teaching* helps to ensure that the hour reflects the strengths of the teaching team and that specialism in the teaching of EAL is recognised. Specialist language support staff can help to ensure that EAL learners are encouraged to apply what they have learnt in the Literacy Hour

across the curriculum. Language support teachers should work with teachers to select resources and texts that meet the needs of EAL learners.

During the Literacy Hour additional staff can:

- support learners who are new to English;
- work with identified groups;
- team teach and share the delivery of the whole class sessions; and
- observe and record the participation of individuals during the whole class session.

go to top

Key questions for teachers

Teachers may find it helpful to consider the following questions in order to maximise the participation of EAL learners in the Literacy Hour and their benefit from it.

- Are specialist language staff included in the planning process?
- Do the texts selected for shared reading include positive role models and representations from a range of ethnic communities?
- Do the materials and teacher questions used during whole class teaching encourage the participation of EAL learners?
- Does the delivery of the shared reading and writing use all the strengths and linguistic skills of the adults and children?
- Is the teaching in the shared reading session giving sufficient attention to establishing meaning for all learners?
- Is the word and sentence work related to meaningful activities?
- In the shared word/sentence level session is the teacher promoting high expectations?
- Does the teaching maintain pace with all learners?
- Is the guided reading helping to meet objectives shared by the reading group?
- Are additional members of staff, where available, deployed effectively during the group work to meet the critical learning needs of EAL learners?
- Does the plenary provide sufficient time for pupils to make considered and full contributions?

go to top

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Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

Children of Reception Age

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with Special Educational Needs

- Introduction
- Who is this guidance for?
- Planning from the Framework for teaching
- Teaching the Literacy Hour

Introduction

The number and type of children with special educational needs varies from school to school. Many pupils with 'special educational needs' may not necessarily need extra or different provision from their peers. Many pupils who have not reached the literacy levels expected for their age will be able to benefit from the National Literacy Strategy as set out in the *Framework for teaching* and their teachers require little, if any, specific further guidance.

Many teachers of primary aged children will have one or more pupil with identified special educational needs, for whom they need to adapt aspects of their approach to the National Literacy Strategy. This part of the guidance aims to support teachers in implementing the strategy effectively for these children. It necessarily covers a wide variety of pupils in a wide range of educational settings. It includes some practical examples to illustrate the points made. These examples are not meant to prescribe a particular approach, but to show what is possible in different situations.

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Mixed Year Classes and Small Schools

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- Introduction
- Who is this guidance for?
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Who is this guidance for?

The Green Paper, *Excellence for all Children*, acknowledged that pupils identified as having special educational needs may be educated in a range of settings including mainstream schools, special schools, units attached to mainstream schools, pupil referral units or some combination of these. Some pupils may receive home tuition or be taught while in hospital.

This section of the guidance offers advice on teaching the Literacy Hour to two broad groups of pupils:

- First, it suggests some ways of dealing with the larger group of pupils who face minor difficulties in learning, reflected in their attainment of levels of literacy below those expected for their ages. The factors holding these pupils back can generally be overcome through normal teaching strategies. Pupils in this group may have been disadvantaged through background or schooling. Some may have had significant gaps in their education, because they have missed school, or experienced temporary hearing, physical, visual or emotional problems. They may have had poor teaching at some stages, or have been moved to a number of different schools. The structure of the National Literacy Strategy will be particularly beneficial to these pupils. Teachers should aim to equip these pupils as quickly as possible with the essential literacy skills that will help them catch up and work at a comparable level to the rest of their year group.

- The second broad group of pupils is much smaller. It includes pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties, which need to be addressed using different teaching strategies. These pupils may need different levels of work from the rest of their peer group, or need to be taught at a different pace for all or most of their school careers. Some of them will always need access to systems such as symbols, signing, Braille or electronic communicators. Some may need to start at a level below the Reception Year objectives in the *Framework for teaching*. But teachers should nonetheless have high expectations of the progress these pupils can make. They should not assume that the pupils cannot ultimately move into the first group mentioned above, or indeed, over time, require no special educational provision at all.

This guidance does not have a separate section about special schools. This is because children's difficulties and the type of provision used to meet them vary so much between, and even within, local areas.

Teachers should bear in mind when reading this guidance, however, the general differences between mainstream and special schools that will influence the way in which they use the advice. A teacher in a mainstream school is likely to be teaching a class in which a minority of pupils are working at a lower level than the others, often with a variety of difficulties. In many special schools it will be possible for the teacher to use the whole class approach of the Literacy Hour, but simply to work at a lower level than with a class of a similar age group in a mainstream school. It is also important to bear in mind that classes in special schools are likely to be smaller than those in mainstream schools, sometimes with at least one

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The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

other adult in addition to the teacher.

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- Introduction
- Who is this guidance for?
- Planning from the Framework for teaching
- Teaching the Literacy Hour

Planning from the Framework for teaching

Teachers should plan literacy work for pupils with special educational needs using the word, sentence and text levels in the *Framework for teaching*. Some pupils with identified special educational needs will be working at earlier levels than those specified in the Framework for their year group. Others will need to work on one term's work for several terms. Some of these pupils will make progress through the different stages in the Framework and many will be able to work at the levels appropriate to their age after they have had structured, intensive teaching.

Teachers may need to use the Framework even more flexibly with some pupils. The aim, however, is to teach to the year and term for their age. Teachers should look through the objectives for the relevant term and identify carefully what children can do. They should then make the necessary adjustments to cover other work, using objectives from earlier terms where appropriate. In doing so, they should ensure that the materials they use and the way they present the work are appropriate to the ages and maturity of the pupils in question.

Some pupils will need to work on the development of particular skills, or to work on some for longer than others, in order to access the objectives in the Framework that are being taught to the rest of the class. For example, pupils with speech and language difficulties will need to work on programmes devised by a speech therapist or specialist language teacher to fit the literacy teaching for the rest of the class. Pupils may need intensive training in the use of signs, symbols, Braille, radio microphones or electronic communicators to give them better access to activities in the whole class and in small groups.

Paul is 6 years old and in a year 1/2 class at a small village primary school. A hearing problem in early infancy meant that he did not learn to make some word sounds. This means he now has problems using words with several syllables. After assessing Paul, a programme of appropriate objectives was drawn up by a language support teacher in discussion with his class teacher and parents. During the sessions of group and independent work in the Literacy Hour, the teacher creates opportunities for Paul to focus on phonic work without drawing other pupils' attention to his difficulties. In one lesson per week she does ten minutes of more intensive individual work with Paul in the Literacy Hour while the other pupils do the general group and independent work.

Pupils with more severe or complex difficulties may be learning to communicate through eye pointing or gestures, beginning to use objects of reference or symbols, matching pictures or symbols to objects or recognising that written words have meaning. The DfEE and QCA are developing scales of criteria that schools can use as a basis for setting targets for pupils who do not attain at National Curriculum levels. These scales will be published by the end of 1998 and may form the basis of further development work.

Many mainstream children with special educational needs, with help and encouragement, will be able to achieve at the level for their age in the National Literacy Strategy, and most will benefit significantly from being involved in classwork with their peers. Where children need to work to

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The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

different objectives, they should nevertheless be taught with their own class and year group.

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- Introduction
- Who is this guidance for?
- Planning from the Framework for teaching
- Teaching the Literacy Hour

Teaching the Literacy Hour

General

1. Adapting questions

During the Literacy Hour, the teacher will need to ask different pupils questions of different levels of complexity. Teachers should not simply teach to the middle range of all the pupils' needs. It will also help pupils with a range of different needs to make progress if teachers show them effective reading strategies, give explicit instructions and reinforce key points.

2. Extra support to help pupils access the lesson

Many pupils with difficulties may need some extra support to enable them to play a full part in the Literacy Hour. In this case, the teacher should consider whether this is best provided through specially designed materials or communication systems or by using an assistant. Effective overall management in the classroom is important to allow this extra support to help pupils participate effectively in the lesson.

Katie and Darren are two Key Stage 2 pupils with learning difficulties, making slower progress with their literacy skills than the rest of the class. They join the class for the initial whole class session, and have support from a classroom assistant. She quietly asks them questions now and then to check they have understood what is going on and to keep them alert and interested. The teacher asks several questions that Katie and Darren should be able to answer, to ensure that they participate with the rest of the class. They then spend a short time with a group during the group session, practising the key skill for that day. Katie and Darren spend the rest of the group and independent work session completing tasks specially designed for them. These reflect objectives for several terms earlier in the Framework. They join the whole class session at the end of the Literacy Hour for reviewing, reflecting on and consolidating what has been learnt that day. The teacher works with Katie and Darren personally twice a week, and checks with the assistant each day to ensure that they are maintaining progress.

3. Working in parallel with the Literacy Hour

Pupils with identified special educational needs should normally work with their peers within the Literacy Hour. They should only be taken out of the hour to work in parallel when extra support within the Literacy Hour or outside this time is not enough. A school's capacity to provide parallel sessions obviously depends on the availability of staff. Parallel sessions should not last for the whole of the Literacy Hour. All pupils should be able to join in at least some of the hour, and the ground covered in the parallel session should be linked to what the rest of the class is doing. The sessions could take place either within the same classroom or outside, with the pupils returning to the main group for the final part of the hour. Some pupils might use a tactile or 'speaking' book to work on the same story or a similar story to the rest of the class. Other pupils might work in a parallel group that is doing targeted work on a specific skill, such as making the

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The National Literacy Strategy – Framework for teaching YR to Y6

Guidance on the organisation of the National Literacy Strategy in Reception classes

Supporting Pupils with SEN in the Literacy Hour

sounds of letters.

go to top

Specific parts of the Literacy Hour

1. Whole class: shared text work

Teachers often use 'Big Books' for shared text work. Some pupils may need support to concentrate without disturbing others. This may be easier if more than one copy of the book is available. Other pupils may benefit from extra materials to help them to follow the text, such as relevant objects, picture or word cards. The teacher may need to sign, use a radio microphone or tactile cues or books to help pupils with visual or hearing impairments to participate.

Nina is 5 years old. She has a visual impairment which has made reading and writing and mathematics difficult for her. She receives learning support from an assistant for ten hours each week. The school has decided to allocate five of these hours to supporting Nina in the Literacy Hour. Nina has her own copy of the book to allow her to participate in the whole class 'big book' session. The assistant supports her in using the book. This enables Nina to follow the story, answer questions and participate in the whole class discussion.

2. Whole class: focused word or sentence work

This is an important opportunity to address the key skills of phonics, spelling and vocabulary in a focused, whole class session. These skills are particularly important to allow some pupils with special educational needs to make further progress in literacy. Appropriate questioning, tasks and feedback can help pupils with special needs to concentrate and participate during this type of whole class work. Pupils can, for example, play spelling games, or games in which they collect word cards and place them in a sequence, or call out words in turn to construct a sentence. Pupils with severe and complex difficulties will need extra support, such as objects, tactile cues, pictures, symbols to take part in activities like these.

3. Group and independent work

The group and independent work session gives an obvious opportunity to address pupils' individual needs, as the work for different groups can be pitched at different levels. And pupils working together in groups can learn by helping each other. It is always important for the teacher to evaluate the progress pupils have made, and change the grouping arrangements if they have not proved effective.

Pupils with identified special educational needs should not automatically be put into the lowest ability groups. Many pupils who have specific difficulties with literacy skills may have the same, or even better, conceptual understanding as the pupils in the highest ability group. It may be important, for example, to place younger pupils in groups where other pupils will act as good models of how to use language effectively.

A teacher can use the time with a group to teach particular pupils and focus on their needs. This will give more individual close contact with the teacher than many pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes currently receive. If a pupil is also working with an assistant outside the Literacy Hour, the teacher should ensure that the assistant uses that time to prepare the pupil for the particular words or story that will be covered in the next group session.

The group session gives extra flexibility to teachers in special schools in which pupils' ages do not correspond well to their levels of prior attainment. It allows them to group pupils on the basis of prior attainment, rather than age. Pupils can also be grouped according to their particular learning objectives, with adult support as necessary. For example, one group could work on constructing sentences, another on punctuation, a third on spelling rules and a fourth on capital letters. If pupils have more severe learning

difficulties, one group could work on sequencing objects or photos, one group could use ICT to write with symbols, a third could work on connecting letters with sounds and a fourth could work on recognising familiar words. Pupils should change groups to fit new learning objectives as their skills develop. Some pupils may need extra support, such as tape recorders, 'speaking books' on the computer, electronic communicators, or processors, to play a full part in their group.

4. Whole class: Include plenary

Pupils with special educational needs will find this session particularly useful, with its emphasis on reviewing, reflecting on, and consolidating, earlier work. Repetition of what has been covered helps to reinforce the work done in pupils' minds. And reviewing progress may help pupils to understand how things they have done in different sessions within the Literacy Hour link together. The strategies used to help give pupils access to this whole class session are exactly the same as for the whole class sessions on shared text work and focused word or sentence work. Teachers may need to invite individual pupils to participate, and should ensure that pupils do not feel threatened at the prospect of doing so. For example, if a pupil is shy about speaking in front of the class, the teacher may invite him or her to point, use a gesture or show what they have done in their written work. If a pupil has severe and complex difficulties, he or she may need to use symbols or signs to reflect on what they have done in the lesson.

go to top

Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

Setting and meeting objectives

High expectations and setting targets for pupils are central to the National Literacy Strategy for all pupils. Schools should link work done in the Literacy Hour with the objectives in Individual Education Plans (IEPs). An IEP should include objectives for progress in literacy if a pupil has been assessed as having difficulties in this area. Teachers can draw on the objectives in the literacy *Framework for teaching* to draw up the IEP, so that pupils can work towards the objectives in the context of the Literacy Hour. It may help if the objectives are broken down into small steps. The objectives in the IEP may well include word level work, but can also include other aspects of the Framework.

Although some pupils may need time to work on their objectives outside the Literacy Hour, there are also lots of opportunities within the hour itself. These include the time in groups, when pupils with the same objectives in their IEPs can work together, or times when the whole class is working on a relevant aspect of literacy. Opportunities like these can be identified in the medium term plan. IEPs sometimes include objectives relating to a pupil's behaviour. It can be useful to set objectives for appropriate behaviour in different parts of the Literacy Hour, such as participating in shared reading, and working effectively in groups or independently.

Support from the teacher or another adult

It is helpful if the IEP makes clear when and how any adult support should be used to achieve the objectives. A pupil with hearing impairment might need an adult to sign during shared reading or writing, or a pupil who is finding phonics difficult may need adult support during group work to practise identifying individual phonemes in words. There may well also be parts of the Literacy Hour in which the class teacher has the sole responsibility for enabling the pupil to achieve the objective. The teacher might do this by setting appropriate tasks for the pupil, asking questions pitched at the appropriate level, or giving the pupil some extra help in a group. It may even be as simple as making sure the pupil is seated close to the teacher.

Resources

The overriding objective when deciding what resources should support the

IEP is to enable the pupil to take part in the Literacy Hour successfully, as independently as possible. The resources will often take the form of additional equipment, such as ICT, adaptations, such as a pencil grip, or specific work cards pitched at an appropriate level. Or it may be support, such as signing, that enables the pupil to work alongside others more easily.

Evaluating progress

It is important that teachers take into account what the pupil has done in the Literacy Hour as well as in other parts of the day when evaluating whether the objectives in the IEP have been achieved.

go to top

Improving literacy skills outside the Literacy Hour

Literacy across the curriculum

Language and literacy are, of course, essential tools that pupils need to gain access to other subjects, which is why the Literacy Hour is so important. But the importance of literacy to success in other curriculum subjects also means that these subjects offer extra opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their literacy skills. Section 1 of the Framework (page 13) makes clear that literacy work should be linked to other areas of the curriculum wherever possible. These opportunities are, of course, important for all pupils, but especially for those who have difficulties with literacy.

Literacy in the school environment

There are many opportunities to promote language and literacy throughout the school environment, as well as within the formal curriculum. Again, whilst this is important for all pupils, it is especially helpful for pupils who have particular difficulties with literacy skills. Labels, signs and explanations that are a regular part of school life, whether on timetables, in the library, classroom, dining area, reception or cloakroom can all give pupils the opportunity to reinforce learning and improve their skills. They may need to be supplemented by symbols, tactile cues or pictures.

Pupils with sensory impairments, or severe and complex difficulties, can learn from consistent routines, such as morning greetings, and cues from speech, signs or objects that they associate with particular activities, such as looking at a symbol, or feeling a plate before eating lunch. Staff and other pupils should be encouraged to participate in different forms of communication, such as signing or using symbols.

The role of the SENCO

The National Literacy Strategy sets high expectations for all pupils. The SENCO's role is to support other staff to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are able to meet those expectations. As the Literacy Hour becomes a regular feature of the school day, the SENCO's role can be developed to support it, in partnership with the literacy co-ordinator. Key objectives for the SENCO should be to:

- advise other teachers how best to support pupils with varying needs in the Literacy Hour and ensure that pupils who are capable of catching up with their peer group do so as quickly as possible; and
- advise on the effective use of assistants, specialist helpers and volunteers, and help ensure they are familiar with the *Framework for teaching*.

SENCOs may have very little time allocated to them for carrying out these important tasks. As noted in the TTA's national standards for SENCOs, co-ordinating support for special needs throughout the school should not fall

exclusively to the SENCO. The school's senior managers should plan and monitor the timetable carefully in order to get the best out of the staff resources available. Parents, volunteers or older pupils can also help by encouraging pupils to practise their skills aloud, or reading to them, with appropriate training.

go to top

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